



March 8, 2016

**Testimony for HB 4822
Senate Education Committee**

Thank you Chairman Pavlov and Senate Education Committee Members. My name is Cruz Ramirez, and I am the Policy Manager for Reading Partners, a non-profit with a mission to help children become lifelong readers by empowering communities to provide individualized instruction with measurable results. Our organization works with communities to provide a team of trained volunteers who deliver one-on-one literacy tutoring to children in grades K through 4 who are not reading at grade level.

Our program is an example of an evidenced-based intervention that focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, including oral skills, and reading comprehension. We are successfully helping struggling readers become proficient across the nation. Reading Partners was originally founded in California in 2001 under the name 'YES Reading' but now operates in 10 states across the country and the District of Columbia (California, Colorado, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, and Washington DC). In addition to the 11 current locations, Reading Partners is working with the Skillman Foundation in Detroit Public Schools and we plan to expand to other locations in Michigan in the very near future.

We are truly thrilled that state leaders in Lansing are working on Michigan's first comprehensive early reading program. We are even more pleased that this included an emphasis on early identification of struggling readers and a significant amount of funding to train teachers and provide additional support to students. The approaches are consistent with comprehensive reading policies that many other states across the country have recently adopted.

While our organization is not a proponent of retention, the language included in the bill in front of you today provides a common sense approach to retention that includes the necessary input from parents, educators, and school administrators. We appreciate the hard work and deliberation of this committee, as well as the time and effort of your colleagues in the House of Representatives and those in both the public and private sector who have served on Governor Snyder's 3rd Grade Reading Workgroup. We believe the S-3 version of HB 4822 strikes the right balance and is a step in the right direction for children's literacy and for that reason offer our support in the passage of this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,

Cruz Ramirez

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